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INFO RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 0624
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 7612
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY 5792
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 4211
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1700
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY 4217
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 3313
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI PRIORITY 8213
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI PRIORITY 5782
RUEHON/AMCONSUL TORONTO PRIORITY 0503
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 2529
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 000034

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DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/INS, DS/IP/SCA, AND DS/ITA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/08/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [MOPS](#) [ASEC](#) [CE](#)

SUBJECT: SRI LANKA: TIGER ATTACK KILLS MINISTER OUTSIDE
COLOMBO

REF: A. COLOMBO 0007

[1](#)B. COLOMBO 0015

Classified By: Ambassador Robert O. Blake, Jr., for reasons 1.4(b,d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. On January 8, non-cabinet Minister of Nation Building D.M. Dassanayake was killed in a roadside bomb attack just outside of Colombo. Initial indications are that Dassanayake was likely a target of opportunity for the LTTE. This incident is the first successful assassination of a senior GSL official since May 2006, and represents the type of activity we anticipate following the abrogation of the CFA. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (U) On January 8, non-cabinet Minister of Nation Building D.M. Dassanayake was killed in a roadside bomb attack just outside of Colombo. (Note: A non-cabinet minister is similar to a deputy minister, but with full ministerial privileges.) A claymore mine was detonated around 10:30 am as the Minister's convoy passed through the town of Ja-Ela, on the primary route between Colombo and Bandaranaike International Airport. The Minister suffered severe head injuries and died during surgery, according to Lalini Gurusinghe, deputy director of the Ragama government teaching hospital. Ten others were wounded in the attack.

[1](#)3. (C) Indian Deputy High Commissioner A. Manickam told DCM today that Dassanayake was likely a target of opportunity. Based on intercepts of LTTE communications this morning, he said, the LTTE did not know whose motorcade it was attacking, just that it was a government motorcade. He characterized the Minister as a "known thug."

[1](#)4. (C) Dassanayake, a Sri Lanka Freedom Party Member of Parliament from Puttalam, entered Parliament in 1994. He was heavily involved in the coconut industry in and around Puttalam and was generally considered corrupt. Allegations against him include human smuggling and trafficking in persons. He was charged with the murder of his primary opponent in Puttalam during the 2004 general elections. There were also allegations that he assaulted a large number of his opponent's supporters. He faced similar assault

charges during an earlier North West Province provincial council election. Dassanayake was not convicted on any of these charges.

15. (C) COMMENT: This is the first successful assassination of a senior GSL official since the June 2006 killing of Major General Parami Kulatunga, the military's third highest ranking officer. The Minister's assassination is the type of activity that is anticipated following the abrogation of the CFA. Similar incidents over the coming weeks and months are likely. We also expect that the Minister's assassination--or the next similar attack--may be used by the GSL as grounds for banning the LTTE, a move the JVP has been advocating and one that will make it even more difficult to resume peace negotiations.

BLAKE